

National Coalition for Equity in Public Service (NCEPS)

Dear Mr. Porter

Established in 1994, the National Coalition for Equity in Public Service (NCEPS) is a joint initiative of the five leading national organizations that promote the participation and advancement of minority and women managers and employees in the Federal Government.

NCEPS is composed of the elected leaders of the following organizations:

- Blacks in Government (BIG)
- Federally Employed Women (FEW)
- Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)
- National IMAGE, Inc. (IMAGE) (Hispanics)
- Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE)

Among other objectives, NCEPS jointly monitors and represents minorities and women on such issues as equal employment opportunity policies and practices, and civil rights in general such as monitoring the Government's service to and treatment of minority Americans and immigrants.

Given these objectives and the membership we represent, NCEPS joins with the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and calls for the removal of the murals in the Ariel Rios Building owned by the General Services Administration in Washington, D.C. the murals are an affront to all minorities and women as they graphically illustrate the negative stereotypes that each of our respective organizations strives to combat, particularly within the federal sector. The murals have repeatedly been referenced by Native American employees working in the building as creating a hostile work environment. However, they remain in place after several years; a testament to the inaction of the federal government in responding to the critical civil rights issue.

Additionally, the defamatory depictions of American Indians in the murals offend visitors and customers and are inappropriate for a federal work place. The violent nature of the murals, particularly toward women, perpetuates the myth of the savage and brutal American Indian male. This is not an issue of political correctness; it is a civil rights issue. Continued display of the murals reinforces an institutional racism that should not be allowed in any federal facility much less our Nation's capital.

While the initial Historic Preservation Act 106 public comment period has recently closed, it appears that a second comment period is planned. NCEPS asks that this letter and our comments be included as an official part of the record. As organizations representing thousands of federal workers, our comments should be considered in the General Services Administration's decision-making process. We also understand that there will be a "forum" of experts convened for the purpose of discussing this issue in

October, and request that NCEPS be represented on the panel. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you on this issue.

Sincerely,

Julius Crouch
Executive Director